1.   A distributed network computing environment, comprising:

2   a plurality of clients communicating within a multicast cloud using a stream-specific behavior to implement a groupware application; and

4   one or more network routing modules or router embedded applets operative to support the stream-specific behavior in addition to normal packet-routing.

2.   The environment of claim 1, wherein the application is a distributed

2   simulation or game.

3.   The environment of claim 1, wherein the application is a client selectable and

2   controllable data service associated with the distribution of audio, video, or other digital signal stream.

4.   The environment of claim 1, wherein the clients enter, leave, and interact with

2   the cloud through a lobby manager.

5.   The environment of claim 4, wherein the lobby manager is further operative to

2   validate the application in terms of compatibility and download data to correct for deficiencies.

6.   The environment of claim 4, wherein the lobby manager is further operative to

2   simultaneous support multiple clouds through multicast or replicated unicast protocols.

7. The environment of claim 1, wherein the routing modules implement

2 application-specific message culling to reduce client-cloud communications.

8. The environment of claim 7, wherein the message culling includes message

2 omission, rerouting, and other quality-of-service modifications.

9. The environment of claim 7, wherein the application communicates internal

2 state changes into the cloud through an API.

10. The environment of claim 1, wherein the application is a massive groupware

2 application involving thousands of world-wide participants.

11. A distributed network computing environment, comprising:

2 a network-enabled client application;

at least one lobby manager that facilitates communications between the client

4 application and a federation; and

one or more network routing modules or router embedded applets that implement

6 application-specific message culling to reduce the communications with the federation.

12. The environment of claim 11, wherein the application is a distributed

2 simulation.

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13.   The environment of claim 11, wherein the application is a game.

14.   The environment of claim 11, wherein the application is a client selectable

2   and controllable data service.

15.   The environment of claim 14, wherein the data service includes audio, video,

2   or other type of digital signal feed.

16.   The environment of claim 11, wherein the routing modules further support a

2   point-to-multipoint distributed communications model between clients.

17.   The environment of claim 11, wherein:

2   at least some of the client applications run on host platforms; and

the routing modules further support conventional internet packet routing among the

4   hosts.

18.   The environment of claim 11, wherein the routing modules further support

2   one or more conventional multicast protocols.

19.   The environment of claim 11, wherein the application communicates internal

2   state changes into the federation through an API.

20. The environment of claim 11, wherein the message culling includes message

2 omission, rerouting, and other quality-of-service modifications.

21. The environment of claim 11, wherein the lobby manager is further operative

2 to validate the client application for compatibility with the federation and download data to

correct for deficiencies.

22. The environment of claim 11, wherein the lobby manager is further operative

2 to simultaneous process multiple federations.

23. The environment of claim 22, wherein the federations communicate through

2 multicast or replicated unicast protocols.